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Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes

Two out of every three people with diabetes will die from heart attack or stroke; a sobering statistic for the 63,000 Idaho adults with diabetes. Heart disease strikes adults with diabetes more frequently, and at a younger age, unless they take action.

February is American Heart Month, and the Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program encourages Idaho adults with diabetes to prevent heart disease and stroke by controlling the ABCs of diabetes. They are:

- **A** is for A1C. The A1C test (sometimes known as the HbA1c or hemoglobin A1c test) measures average blood glucose, or blood sugar, over the last three months. A1c levels should be tested twice a year, with A1c levels under 7.
- **B** is for blood pressure. High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. Blood pressure should be checked during each healthcare visit, and be below 130/80.
- **C** is for cholesterol. Bad cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries. Cholesterol should be tested at least once a year, with LDL cholesterol measuring below 100.

Adults who do not meet the ABC target numbers can work with their healthcare provider to develop an action plan of lifestyle changes and, when appropriate, medications to reach the healthy goals of the ABCs.

(more)

People with diabetes also are encouraged to:

- Get at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity, such as brisk walking;
- Eat less fat and salt;
- Eat more fiber – choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans;
- Maintain a healthy body weight;
- Stop smoking – ask your healthcare provider for help;
- Take medicines as prescribed;
- Ask your doctor about taking aspirin; and
- Ask family, friends and co-workers to help you manage your diabetes.

For more information about diabetes and heart disease, contact the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) at 1-800-438-5383 or www.ndep.nih.gov. For questions, contact the Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program's Mimi Hartman at (208) 334-4928 or Stacy Knipple at (208) 334-5788. Additional information about diabetes in Idaho can be found online at: <http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/>.

The National Diabetes Education Program promotes awareness of the ABCs of diabetes through its "Be Smart About Your Heart. Control the ABCs of Diabetes" campaign. NDEP, the leading federal government source of information about diabetes prevention and control, is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 200 public and private partners.

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